



The BVARC BEACON



Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club
AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 2017

VOLUME 41 ISSUE 9

THE BVARC BEACON

The new name for the Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

BVARC had a newsletter naming contest with a prize of a \$100 Gift Certificate from DX Engineering. A total of 141 names were submitted. Volunteers were requested to be on the selection committee and 4 stepped forward, including 2 past presidents. The winner was Keith Stolle, KE5ITH. We will work on changing the masthead in the upcoming months; for now, we made some text changes to reflect the new name.



BVARC SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, September 14, 2017, 7:30pm, 421 Eldridge Rd., Sugar Land, TX

As this issue of The BVARC BEACON goes to press, the subject of the featured presentation at the General Membership Meeting is not available. Please check the website as the date approaches as well as the e-mails on the reflector.



Report on the August General Membership Meeting

The Annual BVARC Ice Cream Social took place at the August General Membership Meeting. Many thanks go to Scott Medbury, KD5FBA and his family for making this happen. There was plenty of ice cream, soft drinks and goodies.

The winning name of the BVARC Newsletter Naming Contest was announced, the winner announced and the prize awarded. See more information above.



Hurricane Harvey and this month's edition of The BVARC BEACON

Because of Hurricane Harvey, some material was unavailable for this month's edition of The BVARC BEACON. Many members were affected by the hurricane to varying degrees. We hope they are able to recover as fast as possible and wish them the best.



The Prez Says

As this issue goes to press, this article is not available. We expect it to resume next month. Check the BVARC website and the BVARC Reflector e-mails for general information.



BVARC Monday Night Public Service Net Updates

Don't forget the BVARC Monday Night Net starts at **8 pm** on 146.94 (167.9). The order of check-ins starts with mobile units first then fixed stations. If you have something for the net, make sure you let Net Control know about it when you check in. We are looking for Net Control Operators. Contact Rick, w5rh, if you are interested. Here are recent check-ins with control-ops:

5/15 - 10 - Jo, ke7nsb	6/19 - 16 - Jo, ke7nsb	7/24 - 16 - Dave, k5ekw
5/22 - 21 - Clint, kf5ndf	6/26 - 28 - Clint, kf5ndf	7/31 - 14 - Terry, k5pgf
5/29 - 17 - Terry, k5pgf	7/3 - 18 - Dave, k5ekw	8/7 - 20 - Dave, k5ekw
6/5 - 25 - Dave, k5ekw	7/10 - 21 - Rick, W5RH	8/14 - no net
6/12 - 12 - Dave, k5ekw	7/17 - 7 - Jo, ke7nsb	8/21 - 10 - Jo, ke7nsb

BVARC QUICK STATS

Date	Members	Newsletters	Life Members
8/25/17	196	187	68



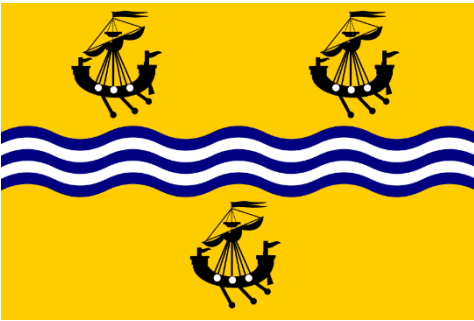
BVARC Historical Vignettes – BVARC's Newsletter

Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian

As this issue of The BVARC BEACON goes to press, this month's insertion of the BVARC Historical Vignettes is unavailable. It will resume with next month's issue.



Where in the world is . . .
The Outer Hebrides (GM)
CQ 14 ITU 27
IOTA EU-010



No, the Outer Hebrides are not the skin of a small mammal or some obscure part of a gourmet dish. They are a group of islands off the Northwest coast of Scotland in the North Atlantic Ocean. With a population of 26,000 only 15 islands are inhabited and more than 50 uninhabited ones in the group.

Over thousands of years of history, the islands were populated or conquered by Romans, Norsemen, Scots and Celts; as well as Britons. The islands are peppered with Gaelic and Celtic names that are not easy for the untutored tongue. One of the largest islands in the group, South Uist, pronounced *Uibhist A Deas* in Gaelic, is blessed with white sand beaches. A feature normally seen in the warmer latitudes. Don't be lulled into

a tropical mood, because the seawater is v-v-v-very c-c-c-cold at these latitudes.

The Hebrides is the home of a unique spiritual, civilized culture, the true heartland of the Gaels and the Gaelic language.

One of the best ways to get around on an island is by car, but be warned because nine times out of 10 the locals don't bother with the passing places on single track roads, they come straight at you.

Hebridean communities are close knit, friendly, in tune with nature, relaxed and contented with the rhythm of life. People will go out of their way to help you and have the time to be genuinely interested in what you have to say.

Pure traditional music also lives on, with the local mods a focal point for junior and adult choirs, musicians, storytellers, poets and actors. Fans of the pipes can hear the Lewis Pipe Band as they parade through Stornoway town center every Saturday evening in summer.

Visitors have the chance to join in with the locals at Highland games, agricultural shows, themed evenings in community centers, and events like the Hebridean Maritime Festival and the Hogmanay dances. Arts venues such as An Lanntair in Stornoway and Taigh Chearsabhagh in Uist put on regular exhibitions and arts events, often attracting internationally renowned performers and artists.



During the Norse period, the Viking rulers owed allegiance to the Norwegian Crown. Following the ill-fated 1263 expedition of Haakon IV of Norway, the Outer Hebrides along with the Isle of Man, were yielded to the Kingdom of Scotland a result of the 1266 Treaty of Perth. During the period of Scots domination, the islands were the home of various clans that controlled the land. History has preserved the majestic names of the various clans including clans such as McLeish, Macleod,

McMillan, McQueen, MacPherson and the clan MacDonald. Some legends say that Ray Kroc of hamburger fame, is a distant descendant of this last clan. The Hebrides is the home of an unique spiritual, civilised culture, the true heartland of the Gaels and the Gaelic language.

If you are a lover of single malt *whisky* then a *whisky* tour on the *Hebridean* Islands is an absolute must. *Ardbeg* Distilleries, *Scotland*. *Bowmore* Distilleries, *Bruichladdich* Distillery, *Caol Ila* Distillery, *Isle of Jura* Distilleries, *Lagavulin* Distilleries to name just a few.



Whiskey is a fabled part of Scotland and the Outer Hebrides are no exception. Three new distilleries have burgeoned in the thirsty islands. The *Abhainn Dearg Distillery* (pronounced Aven Jarræk); Red River in English, is located in Uig on the Isle of Lewis. It is the first single malt *whisky* from a distillery in the Outer Hebrides since 1829. The Isle of Harris Distillery produces a defining single malt, *The Hearach*. That being the Gaelic word for a person from Harris.

Who says a DX-pedition must be all dits and dahs?

How does the average Outer Hebridean get around the islands?

By ferry of course! The isles are served by a network of private ferries such as the one shown. Schedules are frequent and inexpensive.



The Radio Hotel[®] - HF Receiver Basics -- S9 Band Noise???

By Rick Hiller -- W5RH

A few years ago we had a presentation at a club meeting about the technology change in transceivers over a 50 year period. Starting with the Heathkit HW-101 (a “one function per knob” radio) and then advancing to the Icom 746Pro, which 10 years ago was a fairly high end “menu driven” radio. We then finished with the “then” state of the art Flex Radio 3000- software defined radio. Quite a jump over 50 years, but the presentation had an alternate purpose in that it also explained what each knob’s function is on a typical transceiver.

Reflection -- Back when I started being an SWL, in the late 50’s, the HF radios were quite simple. On/off/volume control, RF gain, (maybe) regeneration, antenna tuning trimmer cap, a VFO or bandset and band spread. Sometimes AGC or more typical, AVC (automatic volume control), but the important thing is that each function was controlled by one knob, (except the on-off/volume). Nowadays you have a knob or button on the front of a transceiver that has 3 modes -- Quick tap or turn, brief hold and long hold. Each does something different. Couple that with the many, many functions hidden in a menu or multiple menus that you have to access and set. Hopefully, you are working with a bit of knowledge of what each of these many menu functions adjusts. If you look back at the BVARC newsletter, May 2013 -- [The Radio Hotel: “Visiting with the Elecraft K3 HF Transceiver”](#), a review of a modern day high end transceiver with lots of multi-function buttons and menu items to set. A general comment in the article about the radio’s extreme flexibility was that “you can adjust everything in this radio except the size of the box”. Ask any K3 owner, it is quite true.

My main point here is that radios have changed. They have become extremely complex in how they are controlled. Their function, however, has remained the same. They receive a signal, amplify it to a reasonable level and then detect it/demodulate it and output an audio waveform that our ears can hear. Pretty much all radios do that no matter how simple or how complex. Now, controlling the individual 4, 5 or more receiver stages of the modern radio with all of the available control functions or settings might not be so obvious to even the experienced HF radio user, as in my K3 experience. For a neophyte ham, it is ultimate confusion.

Back to reality (the abridged version).....2 weeks ago, I had a phone call from a new Ham. He was frustrated over his high noise level and wanted me to assist him in troubleshooting his “antenna problem”, which I did over the phone. He had already done the “battery powered transceiver and pull the power mains to the house” trick, with zero change in the noise level. I instructed him to do a few other basic antenna checks to ensure the antenna was functioning on receive, which it seemed to be. Nothing changed, so we then moved to the radio – an Icom 746 (non-pro). One obvious thing to me was that he was a new ham and did not yet understand all of the controls/functions of the radio and how they would influence his received signal. We started out with a band noise level of a solid S9. I discovered that he had everything ON and MAXED out. I had him turn off the NR – noise reduction, turn off the NB – Noise Blanker, turn off the 20 dB Pre-amp and then adjust the RF gain down to a proper level. Ta dah! He ended up with a band noise level of S3 – quite reasonable. He was then a most happy camper. At this point the radio receiver was at a basic set-up. I told him to use it as now set-up and don’t change anything until he read the manual to figure out what-knob-did-what and then experiment with each one. Also, I encouraged him to find some basic radio functionality explanation articles in QST or on-line...kind of like our club presentation. [Reference: [The Doctor is In](#) – ARRL Podcast May 10, 2017 “Optimizing Receiver Performance”] Look, I realize that he had been a Ham only 3 months, but the parallel is you getting your driver’s license and the first car you drive is an Indy car.

So, my suggestion for those just starting out in HF or those with weird problems that don’t go away, get your Elmer to show you how to set up your new HF radio properly. You’ll be glad you did, as it will make your on air operation most enjoyable and you’ll have more fun....and that is what it is all about.

GL ES 73 DE W5RH Enjoy your hobby.

Next time.... Broadbanding -- Nittany Lions Style





BVARC Firearms and Gun Net

I have been reloading for over 30 years and have 15 years in retail firearms sales.

I was asked to be a moderator on the new Tuesday night BVARC firearms and gun net. We have explored this new venue over the past 6 weeks or so, and would like more folks to chime in with questions. Many of you out there just listen in and that is great, but surely you have a few questions as how something works like a specific pistol and/or shotgun....

This is where we try to get you answers, and sometimes we can hit the primer and have a real bang. We often have questions about some reloading or which hand gun works well for personal defense. What you will find out the best one is the one you feel works best for you. Ask another shooter if you can try his next time you go to the range. You will be amazed as how they feel. Just handling one in the sales floor is not enough.

We also get into some reloading questions for shotgun and metallic cartridges. This reloading will save you about 45% of the price of a new box of ammo..

The same holds true for shot gun ammo.

So we try to cover all bases whether you want to shoot or just get some information on that lever action rifle that you have acquired from your Grandfather.

We can be heard discussing various subjects every Tuesday night at 7:30pm on the 94 Repeater.

If you keep your powder dry you are always gonna have a good time, wither just plinking or shooting in a match.

Respectfully

Jo. L. Keener

Board Member 2 year term and cowboy action shooter

" aka" Buffalo Skinner Joe.



Hamfests

(typically within 200 miles of Houston)

Hamfest info for the next few months. More information at: <http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html#listing>

10/07/2017 | [HamEXPO](#)

Location: Belton, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Temple Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://tarc.org/hamexpo/>



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Contact: Rick Hiller – W5RH rick@tavco.net cell:713-591-4792



BVARC Rag Chew Net

Below is the BVARC Rag Chew Net check-in information:

07/26/17, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, KF5TFJ, KF5ONT, W5VOM, W5HFF, K5LJ, W5RH, KE5OBY (R), WB4KTF. (10 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 68, SN = 12, A = 9, K = 2

08/02/17, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, KF5TFJ, W5TKZ, K5IZO, K5LJ, W5VOM, AA0ST (Dickinson), W5RH, KB4KTF, W5HFF. (11 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 73, SN = 0, A = 6, K = 1

08/09/17, W5TKZ (NCS), K5JPP, KF5TFJ, W5TOM, WA5CYI, KD5CDM, K5LJ, W5RH, K5IZO, W1BG (Katy), W5HFF, AF5XL, N5VCX. (13 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 71, SN = 11, A = 4, K = 1

08/16/17, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, KF5TFJ, K5JPP, W5HFF, K5LJ, N5EKW (Katy), AF5XL, WB4KTF. (9 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 78, SN = 21, A = 4, K = 1

08/23/17, K5LKJ (NCS), KF5TFJ, W5TOM, W5TKZ, K5LJ, N5EKW (Katy), W5HFF, AA0ST (Dickinson), W5RH.
(9 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 85, SN = 48, A = 22, K = 5

(M) = mobile (P) = Portable (R) = Relay (RCS) = remote controlled station (T) = telephone check-in

Net conditions have been Fair to Good this month. Put your station to the test.
Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening.

Regards. John K5LKJ



MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

August 5, 2017 9:00 AM
Bayland Park Community Center
6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas

Board Members Present:

Mike Hardwick N5VCX (President.)
Jon Noxon KF5TFJ (Rec. & Cors. Secretary)
Donovan Balli Kg5BDZ (Treasurer)
Scott Medbury KD5FBA (2yr @ Lg Dir)
Jo L. Keener KE7NSB (2yr @ Lg Dir)

JP Pritchard K5JPP (1yr @ Lg Dir)

Non-voting attendees:

John Chauvin K5IZO Parliamentarian
Micheal Monsour AC0TX Quartermaster
Keith Stolle KE5ITH Visitor

Recorded by Jon Noxon, KF5TFJ Recording Secretary

- 1) Call to Order: The President called for order at 9:05 AM.
- 2) Establishment of Quorum: A business quorum was established, with only one officer/Board Member absent.
- 3) Approval of Agenda: A motion made and seconded to approve the agenda without discussion.
- 4) Club President's Opening Statement: The President thanked those present for attending the meeting.
- 5) Emergency Business:
 - 5a. Two radio operators were locked in the USS Cavalla without benefit of needed facilities. Although the condition was corrected quickly, it revealed an issue that could create problems and liabilities for the Undersea Warfare Center that must be addressed.
 - 5b. Not emergency business, but President called upon John, K5IZO, to report status of the BVARQ Newsletter naming contest. The winning name as determined by a secret committee was not revealed the this time, but shall be revealed along with the submitter's name at the Club General Membership Meeting and Ice Cream Social on Thursday, August 10. The winner shall receive a \$100.00 gift certificate from DXEngineering.
- 6) Approve Minutes from Previous BOD Meeting: As no BOD meeting was held last month, the Board approved the minutes for the June meeting without dissent. No minutes from the meeting not held in July.
- 7) Approve Treasurer's Report: The Board approved the Treasurer's Report for month ending July 31.
- 8) Old Business:
 - 8a. Greater Houston Hamfest Meeting to be held following this BOD meeting
 - 8b. General Membership Meetings scheduled as follows, with topics not listed to be determined:
 - August 10 Annual Ice Cream Social
 - September 14
 - October 12
 - November 9 Chili Supper and Elections
 - December 14 Home Brew/Builder's Night.
 - 8c. Contract with Masonic Lodge signed, and promised extra key to be picked up.
- 9) New Business:

Club donations to the Undersea Warfare Center in support of Museum Ships activities was discussed, and included purchase of an automatic remote antenna tuner (to be retained by BVARC for possible use at other Club events), and funding a split a/c unit for the USS Stewart Radio Room. The decision is deferred to a latter date when our club liaison is present.
- 10) Next BoD meeting dates: September 9, October 7, November 4, and December 9
- 11) Comments: Noting of substance
- 12) Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 AM.

BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

This newsletter is a monthly publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club. For a full listing of officers and information about BVARC, please go to www.bvarc.org. Detailed information will be published in the newsletter every 3 or 4 months. Similarly, the "Eating Schedule" will be published every 3 or 4 months unless there is a change.

General membership dues are \$25.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$5.00 per member per year.

Club meetings are normally held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Sugar Land Masonic Lodge, 421 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, 77478. Check the above website for any possible changes.

BVARC amateur radio testing is being reorganized. Check upcoming newsletters or the BVARC website for developments.

A Public Service Net is held each Monday at 8 p.m. on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.

A rag chew net is held each Wednesday at 7 p.m. on 3910 KHz +/- 3 KHz.

To obtain information about joining **BVARC** or its activities, contact the club's "Elmer," Ross Lawler, W5HFF at 281-701-7602 or see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

Other contacts include:

President., Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, n5vcx@att.net

Newsletter Editor, John Chauvin, K5IZO, k5izo@yahoo.com

Newsletter Printing, Assembly and Mailing, Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM, k5cam@arrl.net

NOTE: Officers, advertising and eating schedule are on the website. They will only be published in the Newsletter every few months.


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SEPTEMBER 2017

**BRAZOS VALLEY
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
P.O. BOX 2997
SUGAR LAND, TX 77487-2997
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

**BVARC General Membership Meeting – Thursday, September 14
Texas QSO Party – Saturday & Sunday, September 23 & 24**



If your mailing label is highlighted in color, it's time to renew your membership!